

## **Programs of Community Court**

### ***Community Service***

Certain defendants are required to perform community service – various clean-up and volunteer projects throughout the City. Community service strengthens communities by reconnecting offenders with local residents through positive work projects and encourages neighborhoods to organize and address crime problems by partnering with the criminal justice system. Neighborhood associations, MARTA, Atlanta Ambassadors Task Force, the Kiwanis Club, Atlanta Humane Society and AID Atlanta are but a few of the organizations that have benefited from the work performed by those completing community service hours ordered by the Court.

### ***Treatment Alternatives***

At the first appearance hearing before the Community Court, defendants who have been identified as treatment candidates – those with mental health, substance abuse problems and/or HIV/AIDS- are referred to clinical evaluators for assessment and treatment recommendations. When mental illness and/or substance abuse are identified as contributing factors in an individual's antisocial or criminal behavior, the Court reviews community-based and in-custody treatment options, diverting individuals to resources that offer the most promise for success. Through the years, partnerships have been developed with more than 50 service providers. The Court takes a supervisory role in offender's treatment plans through frequent review hearings, assertive case coordination with the Probation Division, and when necessary, enforcing tough sanctions for non-compliance.

Under the direction of AID Atlanta, which provides a Case Manager to work directly with defendants, The Community Court Division is able to access services, including health care and housing, for those who are HIV positive. Although testing is available and encouraged, it is not mandatory.

### ***Reunification***

The Reunification program is available for certain homeless defendants who desire to be reunited with family or other social support outside of Atlanta. An assessment determines whether the individual is receptive to treatment and/or services in the city of his destination and whether or not there is a safe and stable place to which he may return. This initiative was adopted by Atlanta's Commission on Homeless and was one of Mayor Franklin's "Seven Points to End Homelessness." The non-profit agency, Traveler's Aid, serves as the coordinator of this effort, assisting defendants with the purchase of bus tickets.

### ***Veteran's Outreach Program***

Defendants identified as veterans are interviewed to assess eligibility for veteran benefits, based on the defendant's military service and medical records. When applicable, an appointment for a physical exam at the Veteran's Administration is scheduled. If needed, a residential treatment plan and bed is secured or an outpatient treatment plan is developed. The VA can assist defendants with physical and mental health needs, addiction issues, housing and job search and placement.

### ***Restorative Boards***

Restorative Boards are composed of a small group of community volunteer citizens who meet with offenders. After extensive training, board members are sworn into service by the Presiding Judge of Community Court. Together the board and defendant discuss the nature of the offense and its negative consequences to the victim, community and offender. An agreement is reached on a course of action that the defendant will take to "right the wrong" his/her actions have created. Activities are also identified for the offender to pursue in order to reduce the likelihood that he/she will offend again. The interest and good will of the neighborhood leaders can prevent a one-time offense from becoming a persistent problem.

### ***Teens Learning Control (TLC)***

The Teens Learning Control program targets young defendants of the court, 21 years old and under, who come before the Court for traffic violations, especially speeding and driving under the influence. TLC provides a hands-on learning environment for the development of responsible driving habits. Educational videos, exams, interactive peer groups and discussions, workshops and seminars, as well as the performance of community service projects are used to promote healthy attitudes and behaviors that result in safety conscious drivers. The TLC program is contributing significantly to saving the lives of Atlanta's teens and young adults.

### ***Women for Women***

On February 13, 2006, the Women for Women (W4W) Program at the Atlanta City Detention Center re-opened its doors to serve the needs of female offenders ready to make positive life changes. The intensive 180-day program is designed to assist female offenders with a history of alcohol and drug dependence by providing them with skills necessary to examine past destructive behaviors that contributed to their addiction and to replace them with constructive alternatives. After completing the W4W program, graduates enter an aftercare treatment program to help ensure continued success.